

FACT SHEET

# S. 1520 WOULD UNDERMINE U.S. FISHERIES AND FISHERMEN

## LEGISLATION THREATENS TO WEAKEN ACCOUNTABILITY IN RECREATIONAL FISHERIES

S. 1520, referred to as the “Modern Fish Act,” would actually turn back the clock on our successful fisheries management law, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The MSA requires all fishermen from all sectors to fish sustainably and accountably. S. 1520 would change the rules for recreational anglers and negatively impact recreational and commercial fishermen as well as coastal communities.

S. 1520 would:

- Reduce accountability for the recreational sector (Sec. 102, 202);
- Undermine science-based catch limits (Sec. 105);
- Decrease rebuilding effectiveness by weakening rebuilding timelines (Sec. 104);
- Bog down management with frequent, mandated allocation reviews (Sec. 101); and
- Reduce opportunities for commercial and for-hire fisheries to develop management solutions (Sec. 103).

**Recreational anglers removed an estimated 145 million fish from our oceans in 2016.** The recreational sector catches an abundance of fish—sometimes more than the commercial sector—in many fisheries, including important fisheries like red snapper, black sea bass, greater amberjack, bluefish, and red grouper. This means that the management of recreational catch has significant consequences on the overall health of fish stocks, including those that are shared between all fishing sectors. **S. 1520 would undermine the sustainability of our stocks, reduce the profitability of commercial and recreational fishing businesses, and decrease fishing opportunities for all sectors.**



© Damien Loverso/Alamy

The MSA benefits recreational fishermen by ensuring there are fish in the water for them to catch. The MSA’s focus on rebuilding fisheries and science-based sustainability has brought stocks like black sea bass and yellowtail snapper back to healthy levels. S. 1520 would put these provisions in jeopardy.

**Well-managed fisheries are profitable fisheries. To ensure we have plenty of fish now and in the future, we must maintain strong, science-based conservation measures in the MSA that hold everyone accountable for what they take from the ocean.**

### ECONOMIC VALUE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RECOVERY ARE AT RISK

The MSA’s science-based management approach has made our ocean fisheries some of the best-managed in the world.

Under the MSA:

- Commercial and recreational fisheries generate more than \$200 billion in sales impacts and support 1.6 million jobs.
- More than 40 fish stocks have been rebuilt to healthy and profitable levels, restoring stability to coastal communities.
- Overfishing, which harms stock health and reduces long-term economic yield, is near record lows.
- More than 90 percent of stocks are fished at sustainable levels, supporting both commercial and recreational fishermen.

*Protect our ocean fisheries and the American communities that rely on them. Oppose S. 1520.*

---

For more information, please contact:



**MARTIN HAYDEN**  
Vice President of Policy and Legislation  
Earthjustice  
202-745-5218  
mhayden@earthjustice.org



**MOLLY MASTERTON**  
Oceans Attorney  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
212-727-4451  
mmasterton@nrdc.org



**MEREDITH MOORE**  
Director, Fish Conservation Program  
Ocean Conservancy  
202-280-6240  
mmoore@oceanconservancy.org



**PETER SHELLEY**  
Senior Counsel  
Conservation Law Foundation  
617-850-1754  
pshelley@clf.org



**WHITNEY WEBBER**  
Campaign Director  
Oceana  
202-467-1937  
wwebber@oceana.org